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17 April 1952

General Matthew B. Ridgway  
Commander-in-Chief, Far East Command

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

Dear Matt:

Your frank and thoughtful letter of 17 March has been received and studied. I appreciate your helpful expression of views on the complex problems involved and assure you that every effort is being made to solve them to our mutual benefit. Constructive criticism is always welcome, and the picture as you see it makes a valuable contribution to my understanding.

As you know, my experience in Moscow convinced me that it is impossible by overt means to obtain sufficient worthwhile information on the intentions and capabilities of our principal potential enemy. This conviction is now equally applicable to all satellite countries, including Communist China.

There is no point in bemoaning opportunities lost in the past six years nor attempting to alibi past failures. The plain truth is that we are only now arriving at a sound organization in the Far East, and a mature approach to these problems. Support structures exist, agent networks are being developed, and with continued armed service cooperation we are confident that more satisfactory results will be obtained.

The vexing problem of information evaluation is always with us. Perhaps we err on the cautious side in our anxiety to protect our sources and conceal our methods. However, these principles must be observed if deep cover, long-range projects are expected to survive. We attempt by assessment and continuing reassessment to arrive at an accurate source evaluation which gives customers a useable yardstick. However,

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25X1 when information of great importance to national security  
 25X1 is received from a single source, that source may be  
 revealed with my concurrence, even if it blows an important  
 network sky high. Moreover, many comparatively low-level  
 operations do not require such elaborate protection and  
 sources may be revealed in sufficient detail to permit  
 accurate determination of whether similar information re-  
 ceived emanated from the same source. I am sure [ ]  
 [ ] can arrive at a satisfactory solution.

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That  
 information is also of considerable interest in Washington.  
 We are stressing its importance in field directives. I do  
 not understand you to say that it is of such overriding  
 importance that all our assets [ ] should be directed  
 toward those targets exclusively. As a matter of fact, I  
 am certain you realize that the political and economic  
 information we are seeking may very well give us a more accurate  
 and timely answer to the question as to whether and when the  
 decision is made for peace or all out war. Our field people  
 have therefore been instructed to be responsive to your  
 desires for military information, having due regard for their  
 long-range responsibilities. I sincerely believe that there  
 is a common sense balance of objectives here, which must be  
 kept under constant review, and your needs will always  
 weigh heavily in that balance. Arrangements can certainly  
 be made to have your requirements regarding targets for  
 collection of information given direct to the CIA repre-  
 sentative in the field for resolution on the spot. Further,  
 agreements can be reached under the provisions of NSCID-5  
 which will permit you to develop operations essential to  
 the security of your command. The entire problem of activi-  
 ties in both peace and war is being reexamined here. In the  
 meantime, through the services of a somewhat strengthened and  
 broadened [ ] you would have an instrument that  
 could be developed into an effective clandestine collection  
 unit for the type of information you require in the field of  
 combat operations.

Your letter of recent date on communications intelligence  
 leads me to believe we are on the road to a more satisfactory  
 solution of that problem in your area.

25X1 DD/P:FGWisner & DD/I:LEBecker  
 Rewritten: WBSmith [ ]  
 Distribution:

Orig & 1 - Addressee  
 2 - Signer ✓  
 2 - DD/P

Faithfully,

10/ *W. B. Smith*  
 Walter B. Smith  
 Director

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